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Sustainable development: Harmony with Nature

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Mr. Glauco **Seoane** (Peru)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 19 (see A/71/463, para. 2). Action on sub-item (h) was taken at the 20th and 28th meetings, on 24 October and 8 December 2016. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records.[1]

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/71/L.8 and A/C.2/71/L.50

2. At the 20th meeting, on 24 October, the representative of Thailand, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Harmony with Nature" (A/C.2/71/L.8).

3. At its 28th meeting, on 8 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Harmony with Nature" (A/C.2/71/L.50), submitted by the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Ignacio Díaz de la Guardia (Spain), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.8.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.50 had no programme budget implications.

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* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in 11 parts, under the symbols A/71/463, A/71/463/Add.1, A/71/463/Add.2, A/71/463/Add.3, A/71/463/Add.4, A/71/463/Add.5, A/71/463/Add.6, A/71/463/Add.7, A/71/463/Add.8, A/71/463/Add.9 and A/71/463/Add.10.

[1] A/C.2/71/SR.20 and A/C.2/71/SR.28.

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5. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.50 (see para. 7).

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.50, draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.8 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

7. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Harmony with Nature

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[1] Agenda 21,[2] the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[3] the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development[4] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),[5]

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want",[6]

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] Resolution S-19/2, annex.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[5] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

[6] Resolution 66/288, annex.

Recalling its resolutions 64/196 of 21 December 2009, 65/164 of 20 December 2010, 66/204 of 22 December 2011, 67/214 of 21 December 2012, 68/216 of 20 December 2013, 69/224 of 19 December 2014 and 70/208 of 22 December 2015 on Harmony with Nature and its resolution 63/278 of 22 April 2009, by which it designated 22 April as International Mother Earth Day,

Recalling also the 1982 World Charter for Nature,[7]

Noting with appreciation the virtual dialogue on Harmony with Nature among, inter alia, experts on Earth jurisprudence, including the participation of those who have been active in the interactive dialogues of the General Assembly, held from 22 April to 22 June 2016 and hosted on the website on Harmony with Nature, to commemorate International Mother Earth Day and to inspire citizens and societies to reconsider how they interact with the natural world in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in harmony with nature, noting that some countries recognize the rights of nature in the context of the promotion of sustainable development,

Recognizing that planet Earth and its ecosystems are our home and that "Mother Earth" is a common expression in a number of countries and regions, noting that some countries recognize the rights of nature in the context of the promotion of sustainable development, and expressing the conviction that, in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote harmony with nature,

Noting that, in promoting a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development in harmony with nature, Earth system science plays a significant role,

Expressing concern about documented environmental degradation, potentially more frequent and intense natural disasters and the negative impact on nature resulting from human activity, and recognizing the need to strengthen scientific knowledge on the effects of human activities on the Earth systems, with the aim of promoting and ensuring an equitable, balanced and sustainable relationship with the Earth,

Taking note of the Peoples' World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, hosted by the Plurinational State of Bolivia in Cochabamba from 20 to 22 April 2010,[8]

Recognizing that a number of countries consider Mother Earth the source of all life and nourishment and that these countries consider Mother Earth and humankind to be an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings,

Noting that in recent years there have been many initiatives on sustainable development governance, including policy documents on living well in harmony with nature,

Taking note of the conceptual framework of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services,[9]

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[7] Resolution 37/7, annex.

[8] See A/64/777, annexes I and II.

[9] IPBES/2/17.

Recognizing that gross domestic product was not designed as an indicator for measuring environmental degradation resulting from human activity and the need to overcome this limitation with regard to sustainable development and the work carried out in this regard,

Recognizing also the uneven availability of basic statistical data under the three dimensions of sustainable development and the need to improve their quality and quantity,

Reaffirming that fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development and that all countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, with the developed countries taking the lead and with all countries benefiting from the process, taking into account the Rio principles,

Recognizing that many ancient civilizations, indigenous peoples and indigenous cultures have a rich history of understanding the symbiotic connection between human beings and nature that fosters a mutually beneficial relationship,

Recognizing also that the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities can support social well-being and sustainable livelihoods and therefore contribute to global efforts and initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recognizing further the work undertaken by civil society, academia and scientists with regard to signalling the precariousness of life on Earth, as well as their efforts, along with those of Governments and private sector organizations, to devise more sustainable models and methods for production and consumption,

Considering that sustainable development is a holistic concept that requires the strengthening of interdisciplinary linkages in the different branches of knowledge,

Stressing the importance of inclusiveness within the United Nations development system and that no one is left behind and no country is left behind in the implementation of the present resolution,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the experts' summary report of the first virtual dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature among, inter alia, experts on Earth jurisprudence,[10] as well as of the hosting of the virtual dialogue, held from 22 April to 22 June 2016, on the website on Harmony with Nature;

2. *Invites* Member States to consider existing studies and, as appropriate, the findings and recommendations of the reports of the Secretary-General on Harmony with Nature,[11] of the experts' summary report of the virtual dialogue, addressing Earth jurisprudence, and of the interactive dialogues of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature in the promotion of the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through harmony with nature;

[10] See A/71/266.

[11] A/65/314, A/66/302, A/67/317, A/68/325, A/69/322 and A/70/268.

3. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to convene, at the seventy-first session of the Assembly, an interactive dialogue, to be held at the plenary meetings to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 22 April 2017, with the participation of Member States, United Nations organizations, independent experts and other stakeholders, to discuss the recommendations of the experts' summary report, so as to inspire citizens and societies to reconsider how they interact with the natural world and to improve the ethical basis of the relationship between humankind and the Earth in the context of sustainable development;

4. *Decides* to continue observing International Mother Earth Day annually on 22 April, requests the Secretary-General to provide continuing support, and encourages Member States to observe the International Day at the national level;

5. *Notes with appreciation* the agreement between the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat,[12] invites Member States to contribute to the earmarked activities related to Harmony with Nature under the trust fund of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, aiming, inter alia, at the participation of independent experts in the interactive dialogues of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature, and invites relevant stakeholders to contribute to the earmarked activities related to Harmony with Nature;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to use the website, maintained by the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to gather information and contributions on ideas and activities to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development in harmony with nature and to advance the integration of interdisciplinary scientific work, including success stories on the use of traditional knowledge and on existing national legislation;

7. *Calls for* holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development, in its three dimensions, that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystems;

8. *Invites* States, as appropriate:

(a) To further build up a knowledge network in order to advance a holistic conceptualization of sustainable development in its three dimensions to identify different economic approaches that reflect the drivers and values of living in harmony with nature, relying on current scientific information to achieve sustainable development, and to facilitate support for and recognition of the fundamental interconnections between humankind and nature;

(b) To promote harmony with the Earth, including as found in indigenous cultures, to learn from those cultures and to support and promote efforts being made from the national level down to the local community level to reflect the protection of nature;

9. *Encourages* all countries to develop and strengthen the quality and quantity of basic national statistical data on the three dimensions of sustainable

[12] Available from www.harmonywithnatureun.org/trustfund.html.

development, and invites the international community and the pertinent bodies of the United Nations system to assist the efforts of developing countries by providing capacity-building and technical support;

10. *Recognizes* the need for broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product in order to better inform policy decisions, and in this regard notes the ongoing work of the Statistical Commission on a work programme to develop broader measures of progress and to conduct a technical review of existing efforts in this area;[13]

11. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to ensure that no one is left behind and no country is left behind in the implementation of the present resolution;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, at its seventy-second session, a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-second session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Harmony with Nature", unless otherwise agreed.

[13] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2013, Supplement No. 4* (E/2013/24), chap. I, sect. C, decision 44/114.